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1 : Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga
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Photo H. Gun

Dance of the shepherds and men of the Circumcision school. (Spelonken, 1886.)

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881 A few days later, the great doctor administers to the boys a purifying medicine which they drink in a mouthful of beer. This rite seems to be rather a separation than an aggregation rite. We often find, when a marginal period comes to an end, separation rites taking place. They mean separation from the *marginal period* itself; for this also involved a kind of pollution which must be removed. Such is probably the aim of the medicine given by the Manyabe. On the other hand, this is also an aggregation rite, as the boys are allowed to drink again for the first time.

II. *The Mayiwayiwane dance.*

532 535 881 The second true aggregation rite is called the Mayiwayiwane dance. The *Mayiwayiwane* are a sort of masks which cover the whole of the upper part of the body, a kind of armour made of woven palm leaves; on the head, they are like a very high helmet protruding in front like a beak. The boys make these masks with the help of the shepherds and of the men and, in this disguise, must perform a special dance with high jumps before the women summoned on a certain day to attend. The boys must not be recognized. Should one of them let the mask fall, it would be a great misfortune, because women must not know who is dancing. 585 581 Moreover the initiated must appear before them as a kind of supernatural beings and fill them with respect and awe. Therefore they must not fall when they dance. Should one of them totter and lose his equilibrium, the shepherds cover him

A Mayiwayiwane mask (1).

(1) This mask is that worn by Pedi boys during the second circumcision school. I cannot guarantee that the Mayiwayiwane mask is of exactly the same pattern.

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535/881 with a heap of grass and the men say : " He is dead !," because a circumcised boy cannot fall and live. One of the shepherds goes in haste to a village of the neighbouring tribe and buys a fowl ; this is killed and its blood is sprinkled over the grass ; the boy who fell escapes when the women have gone home, but the next day, when they come back to the spot, they see the blood and are convinced that, in very truth, one of the circumcised dies when he falls!

Sometimes a little child is taken from the arms of its mother and brought to the place where the boys are sitting hidden during the dance. They kiss him and smile at him, because he is innocent; he may see what women are not allowed to contemplate!

III. *The last day.*

881 The last day is marked by the greatest and most difficult trial. During the whole preceding night, the boys are not allowed to sleep. Sleep is the last enemy they must overcome. They stab the Elephant and repeat the formulae till the morning. Then all the bits of skin remaining from the circumcising are picked up by the Manyabe ; he burns them, and makes them into a powder with which he smears the mulagaru pole. All the masks and grass mats are thrown on to the roof of the shed and, at dawn, the troop of circumcised, surrounded by the shepherds and men, is directed towards a pool and made to run to it without looking backwards ; (separation from the sungi, from the seclusion period). If they were to look at what is taking place behind them, their eyes would be pierced, and they would be blind for ever! Fire is set to the whole establishment by some of the men, and all the filth and ignorance of childhood is burnt in this great conflagration. The boys are led into the water, wash away the [302] white clay shouting : " I am a man," cut their hair (separation rite), anoint themselves with ochre, put on new clothing and are addressed by the father of the circumcision :

" You are no longer *shuburu*! Try now to behave like men. It would be unworthy of you to steal sweet potatoes in the fields as you used to do before. Now the Ngoma is closed and it is taboo

585 girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the
578 heroine of the day, who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages, and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. " Let us accompany her, then we shall return home " sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekeleni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to a most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other, and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride, "as you are becoming the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl! "

To this the bride's relatives shout in return :

" You have nothing to boast about! Stop wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family! "

And they go on in this way, at first in joke, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes even go so far as to bombard each other with the half digested matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet.
585 These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are
535 accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping first on one leg and then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

c) The religious act.

585 The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where
782 the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and
769 groom sit down on the finest of these. It is now that the father

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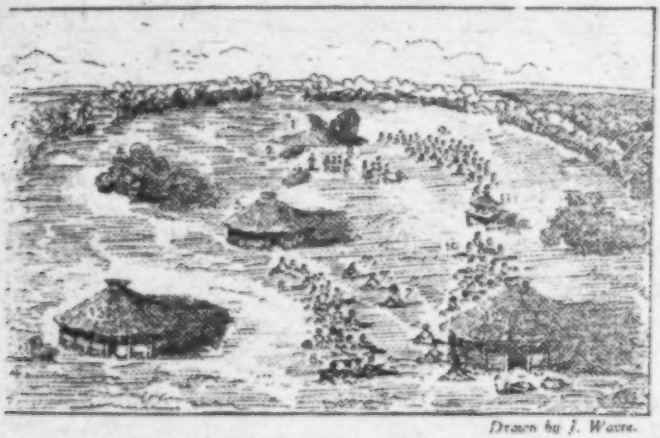
pitifully ; its agony lasted five minutes at least and the whole time the women were shouting with pleasure, because it is necessary that a victim should cry! In the groups, men and women were discussing where and how the sacrificer ought to introduce the blade in order to kill the goat more quickly. His wife came and



Drawn by J. Weare.

The ceremony of crushing down the hut.

1. Deceased's hut, crushed down. 2. Heap of peas. 3. Provisional hut of the widow. 4. Sacrificer. 5. Uterine nephews. 6. Wives of the uterine nephews. 7. Dancers. 8. Women clapping their hands. 9. Other women. 10. Men. 11. Herdsmen. 12. Hut of the younger brother. 13. Hut of the tall woman who danced. 14. A "thigiyane", wood pile built by her daughter-in-law's relatives.

helped him, and not until after ten minutes, at least, did they succeed.

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Then, while the batukulu and the old men were busy with the victims, cutting them up and squeezing the psanyi (half digested grass) out of the bowels, the other mourners began to sing and to dance. First an elderly woman, of a very clear complexion and a mephistophelean face, very tall, with a curiously licentious smile, came into the middle of the place, opened her arms wide and *suma*, began to sing. Together with her song she performed a strange mimicry with her thighs. This mimicry took on a more and more lascivious character ; it became a regular

765 womb dance, so immoral (Annotatio 9)[1] that the men dropped
535 their eyes, as if they feared that she would take off all her clothing.
831 But the other women seemed thoroughly to enjoy this horrible performance, and encouraged her by clapping their hands and beating their drums. The words of her songs were also of a very questionable character. She described an adulterous woman going during the night from one hut to another, seeking for lovers, knocking on the walls (to attract the notice of the men ?).

> The walls of the huts have deceived her fellow-women when she goes knocking on them...

Another old woman, of at least seventy years of age, followed her, and running with a mincing gait through the place, uttered words of the same kind.

This seems very immoral indeed. Let us remember however that, in the opinion of the Thongas, these songs, which are taboo in ordinary life, are specially appropriate to the mourning period "These women have been uncovered by the death of their husband," said Mboza. "There is no longer any restraint on them. They are full of bitterness when they perform these lascivious dances." The reason is perhaps deeper, as it is not only the widows who sing these words ; we are still in a marginal period, the period of mourning, and these phases of life are marked for the Bantus by this strange contrast : prohibition of sexual intercourse and a shameless outpouring of impure words and gesticulations (Annotatio 10).[2]

765 But in the meantime the *batukulu* had finished their work.
782 They had already distributed the various parts of the victim according to rule, to the visitors, who would eat them on their way home, not in the village ; it is taboo. They had put aside one shoulder, the lungs and one of the hoofs for the sacrifice. Relatives had made a provision of *psanyi*. An old man then took a pill made of the *psanyi*, that found in the smallest stomach, called shihlakahla. He pressed it against his lips, took into his mouth a little of the liquid squeezed from it and spit it out again with the sacramental *tsu*. He then proceeded to pray : "You, Manyiban, you have left us. People used to say you were a

1 [See p. 617 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

2 [See pp 517-518 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

643 chiefs are entitled (1). The *elevation and the presentation* ended,
535 the next proceeding is the *gila* or war dance. The heroes of the army (batlhabani ba fumo), and the young men of blood royal rush one after the other into the enclosure brandishing their weapons, jumping as high as they possibly can, imitating acts of prowess on the battle field and simulating the transfixion of their enemies. The *gila* continues until the cry is heard : "Ye-yi, yé-yi, ye-yi." This murmuring sound uttered by the whole army marks the end of the jumping, and all re-form into line. All the shields must now touch one another, forming an immense unbroken circle, and then comes the *guba*, the intonation of the
643 solemn chant which is at once the principal patriotic song of the
533 tribe, the coronation hymn, the dirge of mourning, the war-song,
539 and the sacred melody par excellence :

Sabela ! Sabela nkosi ! Ji ! Ji !
Answer us ! Answer us, O chief ! Ji ! Ji !
Si ya ku wela mulambu mkulu wa ka nkosi.
Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief.

This chant, which is in the Zulu language, is difficult to understand. The soloist commences with : "Sabela nkosi" which may be translated "Obey the chief ;" but the meaning would rather seem to be : "Reply to us, chief!" and, if taken in this sense, these words would be a request made by the army

643 (1) The word *Bayete* is said to be of Zulu origin and to convey the following
609 meaning : bring thine enemies hither and destroy them ! *Ndjao* means lion. The
576 warriors employ these terms to extol the power of their chief and, at the same time, to express their allegiance to him. There is a modern tendency to use this solemn salutation in a more general manner : for instance it is addressed to the Whites and not only to those in authority, but more or less to every one, even, in certain cases, to missionaries ! I always remember my arrival at the village of Shirinda, when I went to call on the chief Mahatlane, then unknown to me. I arrived at the gate of the kraal mounted on a most unpretentious little donkey and enquired of two young men who were there, where I could find the chief. "Bayete !" was the salutation I received and there was certainly nothing very regal either in my appearance or my "mount." One of these young men proved to be Mahatlane himself ! *Bayete* is also frequently used in acknowledging a gift from a superior and would then be merely the equivalent of "thank you." In Gaza, Gungunyana would not allow Bayete to be said to any one but himself. All the petty chiefs of the Ba-Ronga insisted on their royal salutation and the Ngoni king could not put a stop to it, as they were direct dependencies of the Whites and did not derive their authority from him.

1 [For the coronation of a chief--Analyst]

643 to the chief, to which he will reply by executing the dance which
533 follows. To this exclamation of the soloist the warriors respond
539 by striking their shields with their assagais, producing a hard sharp sound, which the chant tries to render by the syllable "Ji! Ji!" Then they stamp their feet, saying: "Vu! Vu!" and this enigmatic sentence follows: "Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief." What is this river? Can it be that which separates the Mpfumo country from Khosen, namely the Nkomati? Or the Mitembe, marking the frontier between the Northern and the Southern Ba-Ronga? Or do not these mysterious words rather refer to the river of death, which the entire host should cross without hesitation if called to do so by their chief? Whatever the exact meaning may be, this chant must be an assurance of loyalty on the part of the warriors to their king and probably also an appeal to his valour.

643 The chant ended, no one is allowed to leave the ranks. The
535 chief alone rushes into the enclosure; every warrior holds his
701 shield in his hand and strikes it with hard sharp blows (ku ba ngomana); on hearing these, the chief begins to *gila* in his turn. He executes the war-dance brandishing his assagai, as if killing invisible enemies. The crowd encourages him, inciting him to still further efforts, crying: "Silo! Silo! Silo! Beast of the fields! Lion!" Volleys are fired. The chief redoubles his exertions, gesticulating furiously, perspires profusely, is well nigh exhausted and finally stops! The whole army sits on the ground and the young king is supplied with a jug of beer to quench his thirst.

When the ceremony has lasted long enough, and the warriors have enjoyed at their ease the spectacle of their chief's prowess, the Commander-in-chief dismisses the battalions, one after the other. The circle (mukhumbi) breaks up and all rush to the residence of their respective counsellors, singing as they go the praises of the particular army-corps to which they belong. The members of the royal family return to the capital, where they remain. A counsellor presents each group or regiment with the ox which has been allotted to it; this is accepted with shouts of "bayete." The men cut up the animal, divide the meat and eat it in their respective quarters.

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F. THE WAR DANCE.

535 The *guba* is itself a kind of war dance, as dancing does not mean a change in the dancer's position. Nodding with the head, gesticulation of the hands and slow motions of the feet constitute a dance (kina). In some guba songs, there may be a backward and forward movement of all the warriors to widen or narrow their circle. I have even seen men crossing the mukhumbi, two by two, or three by three, during the guba.

But the true war-dance is the *gila* (Ro.) or *giya* (Dj.) the representation of deeds of valour by warriors who have killed an enemy in battle. The massed chorus of the guba is most imposing, but still more deeply does the *gila* impress one by its wildness. Look at this elderly man who suddenly detaches himself from the circle, stamping with all his might on the ground. His feet beat the earth in cadence, one blow being long, the three following ones short: -ooo. He goes on, making the ground shake, brandishing his weapons with all his might, perspiring from his efforts and pronouncing Zulu words which the throng interrupts by wild shoutings, as if to encourage him... Then he returns to his place, and the whole army concludes the performance by a kind of whistling : zu... iiiiii. ..... prolonged on a high and piercing note, which suddenly descends to a deep and guttural tone : i. aaaaa..... He has hardly resumed his place in the ranks when a young man springs into the circle, jumping like an antelope, holding his assagai and gesticulating all the while, as if transfixing an invisible enemy. His eyes glare like those of a wild beast, and immediately the army entones a song, his song, the one which has been composed to glorify his deed. Possibly his return to the ranks will be greeted by another shout : I..a...Nda-u! — Lion! comparing him to a lion returning to his forest which nobody will dare to attack. The encouragement given by the warriors to the *bagili* and their great final cry are called *khuza* or *khunzela*.

535 703 "At that very moment," says Mankhelu, "the hearts of the young men tremble in their breasts! Their hair stands on end...

535 An extraordinary war spirit comes over them all..." And every
703 one having witnessed these performances in the Thonga or Zulu mukhumbi will confess that they are wonderfully impressive. It is a mixture of dramatic, epic and lyric poetry, three literary *genres* which are still confounded, the whole being enhanced by a deep, wild music and subject to the laws of a certain artistic style.

703 The fighting instincts are excited to the highest pitch by these
643 patriotic choruses and dramatic representations. Thus should
726 the troops be slow in making a start, the young men go dancing to the chief and beg him to "grant them permission" to go forth and slay, or rather to "give them men" to slaughter (ku nyika). The Native idea appears to be that the chief holds the lives of the enemies in his hands; without his permission they cannot go forward, but this once given, they rush enthusiastically to the fray. They even go so far as to taunt him with being an old woman, a coward, because he will not let them go at once (1).

When the excitement has reached the culminating point, and it has been definitely decided to fight, the time has arrived for the magic treatment by which the warriors will be rendered invulnerable.

G. ADMINISTERING THE WAR-MEDICINE.

726 This custom is probably of ancient origin, but I have reason
177 to believe that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, it was practised without
789 any great formality until the advent of the Zulu influence, when
751 it was brought into much greater prominence and invested with more solemnity. "Drinking the war-medicine" took place on several occasions during the revolt of 1894 to 1895. At *Zihlahla* this potion was administered to all warriors before the rebel attack

(1) Gungunyana, on one occasion, when his warriors were importuning him with similar requests, sent the more ardent spirits to wage war unarmed against the wild beasts, and I was told they actually succeeded in capturing a leopard alive and brought it back to the chief!

727 763 killed, "because the whole country would mourn : — they have not been killed by the mat (likuku) at home, but by the assagai on the battle-field! They are men! If any one weeps he will have to pay £ 2." (Mboza.)

726 763 When the Maputju yimpis fought against Nondwane in 1876, in the battle which took place near Malangotiba, (3 km west of Rikatla), they were decimated and eventually repulsed. Their chief Musongi sent them back to fight again. They refused. Then he punished them in the following way : he condemned them to go and fetch water with pots, like women, but they had to go on their knees to the pool, saying : "It is the result of our cowardice" — (Ngi ndaba ya bugwala). Afterwards they had to extinguish a bush fire with their hands, and came home very much scorched and burnt.

When the yimpi is victorious, the return is marked by important 727 songs called *hubu* (cl. dji-ma). The regiments follow each other, 533 each singing his own *hubu*, and they at once build the mukhumbi 535 when they reach the village of the chief. They dance, dance their doughty deeds. Suddenly silence is required ; the counsellors narrate to the chief how the fighting has proceeded and tell him the names of those who have killed enemies, those who have struck the first blow and their *bahlomuri*, viz., those who transfixed the leg and the arm. After which the heroes "gila" to their heart's content, together with the bahlomuri. They are proud! They are applauded! They are the great men of the day, the *tingwaza*, the saviours of the chief!

This leads me to consider the very curious customs connected with the slayers and the slain on the battle-field.

I. THE FATE OF THE SLAIN AND THE TREATMENT OF THE SLAYERS.

1. *The fate of the slain.*

554 When a man has slain an enemy, he has covered himself with 727 the most enviable glory : he has the right to perform the war-dance before the chief. He takes away all the garments from

843 her own pudenda with a much befouled intimate garment which
834 she afterwards burns.
841 Going to the fire they both warm their head and their hands. Then the woman mixes the ashes she has collected with fat and smears it over her husband's limbs, rubbing along his fingers, his arms, and his legs, which is called lula. Afterwards, in the two nights following, they will have intercourse. If the husband has had sexual intercourse not with his wife but with some girl from another village from lustful desire he will be given a fossorium so that the rite lula will come to its completion.]

765 "Annotatio octava (P. 155). Si mulieris parentes procul
783 habitant, maritus eius comes itineris erit, quacum superiore
833 nocte coibit, ad aquæ lustrali vim novam dandam."
505 [Note 8 (page 155). If the woman's parents live far away, her husband will be her companion on the way and he will have sexual intercourse with her the night before in order to give the lustral water new power.]

765 "Annotatio nona (P. 160). Faciebat dum 'Khunye khunye';
535 quibus verbis significatur coitus (khunyeta)."
831 [Note 9 (page 160). She was saying Khunye, khunye during
834 this time; these words signify coitus (khunyeta).

"Annotatio decima (P. 160). Carminum, morum temporis marginalis natura eo obscenior est quo nobilior defunctus fuit. Viguetus narrat: [518] 'Duce vel uno ex principibus mortuo, luctuque consueto præterito, luctum privatum, ad quem boves immolentur, celebrari. Carnem ad baculos humi fixos alligari; homines inde mulierem vocare, eamque posteriorem vestem exuere juberi, neque ullam vestem nisi anteriorem habere quam, si velit, exuere ei liceat. Eam, postea, divaricaturam esse ad unam ex carnis particulis dentibus apprehendendam ita prominentem ut omnes viri eius pudenda videant, quod plerumque 'taboo' (id est nefas) sit.'"

[Note 10 (page 160). The nature of the songs, a custom of the marginal period, is the more obscene the greater the nobility of the deceased person was. Viguet relates: [518] "When the leader or one of the chiefs is dead and the usual mourning has passed, they stage a private mourning at which bulls are sacrificed. They tie the flesh to poles fixed in the ground; then the men call a woman and order her to take off the clothes on her back and they do not allow her to have any clothes on except the one in front which, if she wants to, she may also take off. Then she must seize one of the bits of meat with her teeth, bending forward in such a

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~~535~~ way that all the men can see her pudenda which is
831 much tabooed (that is, sinful)."]
834 "Annotatio undecima (P. 161). Hic, mulier paulo dilutiore
765 colore magnaque statura addit: 'Hi kundjana. id est:
782 coeamus!' "

[Note 11 (page 161). Here a woman with a slightly lighter color and of large stature, adds: Hi kundjana, that is, "let us have intercourse!"]

841 "Annotatio duodecima (P. 187). Hæc sunt ipsissima verba, quibus Makhelu mulieris menstruansis taboo (id est nefas) describit. Mulier menstruans est res, quæ imprimis 'yila' est. Per sex dies 'yila,' id est, nefas est. Septimo die transit flumen ad se lavandam. Octavo ei nondum licet cum marito suo coire; forte enim sanguis pudendis ad hæret, eà insciente. Magis 'refrigescit.' (Verbo phula menstruans mulier comparatur cum aula a foco remota).

Si, ante id tempus, maritus cum uxore cœat, ægrotus fiat, veretrum retro ita recedat ut vir urinam reddere non possit et, brevi tempore, moriatur. Talem vitæ exitum multi habuerunt. Radicibus arboris cui nomen est mayilana vel mulieris menstruantis vestis particulà, a medico ad levem pulverem redactà, quæ ægro bibenda est, morbus sanari potest. Aegrotus multum sanguinis reddet, et veretro exeunte, salvus est."

[Note 12 (page 187). These are the very words with which Makhelu [sic] describes the taboo (that is, the sin) of the menstruating woman. A menstruating woman is something which is, first of all, yila. For six days she is yila, that is to say, taboo. On the seventh day, the flow that cleanses her passes over. On the eighth day she is not yet allowed to have intercourse with her husband; for perhaps some blood is still sticking to her pudenda without her knowledge. She "cools down" even more so. (By the word phula the menstruating woman is compared to the pot removed from the stove.)

841 If the husband should have sexual intercourse with his wife
834 before this time, he will be taken sick, his private parts will
756 decay to such an extent that the man would no longer be able to pass urine and would die within a brief period of time. Many have had such an end to their life. The sick man can be cured by a liquid containing the roots of the tree that is called mayilana or by a particle of the menstruating woman's dress, reduced to a light powder by the medicine man. The sick man loses a lot of blood; after his penis is able to pass water again, the man is well again.

533 fight, when returned from battle, as well as those sung during the march of the troop. I give the striking music of some of these in the next chapter. Tune 24 is the "Sabela nkosi" the great Mpfumo song, also adopted by other clans. Tune 25, with its splendid change from the minor to the major key, is the Tembe and Maputju classical war song. No. 29 is an old Nkuna war song, dating as far back as 1820, before the Zulu invasion ; No. 27 is the principal modern Nkuna song, and
535 No. 28 the Nkuna equivalent to the Ronga *Giraffe song*. These old chants are sung to the accompaniment of the military dance, which consists in trampling on the ground, while rhythmically brandishing the assagais, lifting them first to the right, then to the left, bending them sideways, then downwards, as if to pierce (I. p. 463). They are certainly wonderfully fine compositions.

533 826 644 I include in the same category the laudatory song of the *mbongi* (I. p. 424), a branch of literature in which Court poets display considerable imagination and an extraordinary gift for unbounded hyperbole. All the important chiefs have their mbongi and it is required of the man holding this office that he should have a good chest (shifuba), the chest being to the Thongas the seat of eloquence (as it was to the ancient Romans : Pectus est quod oratorem facit!). The elucubrations of these poet laureates sometimes last a very long time and may have real poetic value.

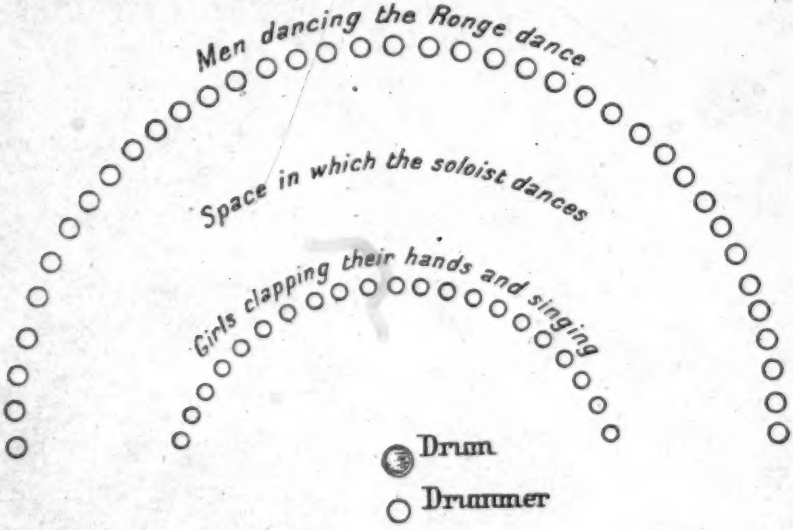
614 553 As we saw (I. p. 361) each clan and even each family possesses its own laudatory phrase ; this is the *shibongo*, a word which generally means family name, but which etymologically signifies the formula by which the clan or family glorifies (bonga) itself. These formulae are usually short and often contain archaic expressions or allusions to unknown facts which make them very difficult to understand. I have given some of those from the Ronga territory. Here are two others, collected by the Rev. A. Jaques amongst the Transvaal Thongas, who seem to cultivate this custom more than the coast clans ; they are perhaps encouraged to do so by their Pedi neighbours, who are very fond of these formulae, called by them *mireto*.

V. *Dramatic poetry.*

This is perhaps too lofty a term by which to designate the kind of songs, or other literary productions, which I am going to describe. Primitive folk have no theatre, no elaborate tragedies or comedies. But our tribe certainly possesses the rudiments of histrionic art in the dances accompanied by songs, which are called *tinsimu ta Ronge*, the songs of Ronge. The word *Ronge* does not seem to be related in any way to Ronga. It is applied to an old collection of songs in which dancing played the principal part and which were quite peculiar to the clans of the Coast. They were performed after harvest, when the storehouses were full and when the Ba-Ronga bid themselves : "Eat, drink and be merry!" Boys and girls used to remain in the bush for many weeks learning these dances, in a kind of school, which may have taken the place of the circumcision school ; the latter has been suppressed for more than a century in these districts. I say, these songs *were* performed, — because they are now fast disappearing, having been replaced by Zulu songs, called *mudjatu* and *muthimbo*. These are, in their turn, giving way to new dances called *gumpsa*, in which young boys and girls put on milala palm leaf dresses. These were the great novelty in 1908 and pupils of the Mission schools were deserting them to play gumpsa. Another new dance is called *shiloyi*, and consists in the imitation of boatmen : the performers sit down and execute movements similar to those of sailors pulling a boat, to the accompaniment of song. The *shindjekandjeka* was another dance executed by the wives of Mubvesha (I, p. 287). Most of these dances take place in the capital, and the Chief summons all the boys to take part in them. This is not absolutely obligatory, but should any one begin the training, and then leave before it is finished, he will be fined. No doubt these complicated dances mark the beginning of a theatre, as will be seen shortly : they at any rate give the impression of an organised ballet.

Many of the songs refer to *historical events* in the life of the clan, or to by-gone occurrences, almost forgotten, and it is for

533 this reason that some of them are so difficult to understand ;
535 they also vary from one clan to another. The following, according
539 to Spoon, is the most popular song in Nondwane. An individual performs on a drum to give the time to the dancers. Around the drummer, in a semicircle, are arranged the girls who sing the refrains (tekelela), and clap their hands to encourage the soloist (musimi). Farther away, in concentric semi-circles, stand the



The Ronge dance.

men of the village, dancing but not singing. Between the two semicircular ranks the soloist has free play. He commences by saying :

Ndji pfumala shigoba sha nakulori.
Why ? I haven't got a partner for the dance !

The girls reply :

Hi hlula hi mbilu yi babisaka.
Our hearts are indeed very sad.

He continues :

A pi na ntshumu ! Makweru Ñwakubyele a fanaka ni pataka dja balungu.
Never mind ! My brother Ñwakubyele (will do very well), for he shines like one of the Whites' silver pieces !

of the goats and the nudity of the artist! There are many kinds of goatherds' flutes. One is called *ndjwebe* ; its sound resembles mbvrrr..... mbvrrr..... Natives are in the habit of putting a feather inside their bone flutes in order to keep them clean. 534

Another more elaborate flute is made of a reed, having a hole at one extremity for the mouth, and three others at the other extremity for the fingers. According to the number of holes stopped, the sound varies. It is called *shitiringo* (Dj.), or *shitloti* (Ro.), and Native artists are capable of producing pleasing tunes upon it. No. 39 in my collection of tunes is a shitiringo melody, heard on the banks of the Great Tabi.

But the true tinanga are the trumpets which compose the *bunanga*, the band already referred to (I. p. 431) as being one of the manifestations of Court Life. They are also called *timhalamhala*, from the name of the mhalamhala (Hippotragus niger), the large, dark antelope whose horns are employed for the manufacture of these trumpets, together with the horns of the mhala (impala) antelope. These instruments are tuned according to rule. Ten of them, each having a different sound, form a *simo*, a kind of orchestra, completed by the big and the small drum already described. They are used to accompany the special dances which take place in the little capital of the Ronga clans, and in which the players are themselves the dancers, marching behind each other, with peculiar contortions, narrowing and widening their circle according to the time beaten by the drum. 535

The bunanga players receive a regular training before going to the capital, to play before the chief. When they have prepared the numbers of their programme, they all go to the capital, each sub-chief leading his band, for a musical contest. The tinduna act as judges. Each *simo* plays in turn. The judges discuss their respective merits, and when they have come to a decision, they call a young man to proclaim the result of the competition. This proclamation is called *ku tjema shibangu*, to cut the contest, and is performed in a very curious way. The herald has an axe in his hand. With a loud voice, he pronounces the verdict : "So and so played badly ; so and so better ; the one who played best is so and so." — "Nkino hi nkhensa wa ka man." Then he 533